

We claim:

1. 1. A method of enhancing voice mail messages by providing one or more bookmarks for a voice mail message left by a caller.
2. 2. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the associated bookmarks.
3. 3. The method according to Claim 2, further comprising the step of playing the bookmarked message to a listener.
4. 4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein selected ones of the bookmarks segment the voice mail message according to one or more topics.
5. 5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein selected ones of the bookmarks are used to mark one or more segments of the voice mail message as having one or more different degrees of importance.
6. 6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein a default degree of importance is associated with segments not otherwise marked.
7. 7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein selected ones of the bookmarks correspond to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

1       8.     The method according to Claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a callback telephone number for the caller.

1       9.     The method according to Claim 7 or Claim 8, wherein at least one of the special types of  
2       information is a callback time and/or date to use when responding to the voice mail message.

1       10.    The method according to Claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a name of the caller.  
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1       11.    The method according to Claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

1       12.    The method according to Claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is an e-mail address.

1       13.    The method according to Claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

1       14.    The method according to Claim 2 or Claim 3, further comprising the step of using the  
2       bookmarks to perform actions selectively on one or more segments of the voice mail message.

1       15. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the selected segments are associated with a  
2       topic of the voice mail message.

1       16. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the selected segments have one or more  
2       different degrees of importance.

1       17. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the selected segments are associated with one  
2       or more special types of information in the voice mail message.  
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1       18. The method according to Claim 14, wherein the actions comprise one or more of saving,  
2       deleting, forwarding, listening, skipping, or repeating the one or more segments.

1       19. The method according to Claim 18, wherein the actions further comprise marking a  
2       selected segment as protected or confidential.

1       20. The method according to Claim 19, further comprising forwarding the segment marked as  
2       protected or confidential to another party.

1       21. The method according to Claim 17, wherein at least one of the special types of  
2       information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and where at least one of the actions  
3       comprises establishing a connection to the URL.

1       22. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the creating step further comprises storing the  
2       bookmarks and the voice mail message separately as the bookmarked message.

1       23. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the creating step further comprises storing the  
2       bookmarks and the voice mail message intermingled as the bookmarked message.

1       24. The method according to Claim 3, further comprising the step of announcing a number of  
2       the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.  
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1       25. The method according to Claim 5, further comprising the step of announcing the different  
2       degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

1       26. The method according to Claim 5, further comprising the step of announcing a number of  
2       the segments in the different degrees of importance.

1       27. The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the step of announcing the special  
2       types of information in the voice mail message.

1       28. The method according to Claim 7, wherein particular ones of the special types of  
2       information are required, and further comprising the step of prompting the caller to provide input  
3       for each particular one for which no bookmark is otherwise provided.

1       29. The method according to Claim 2, further comprising the step of associating one or more  
2       audio cues with one or more bookmarks of the voice mail message.

1       30. The method according to Claim 29, further comprising the steps of:  
2              playing the bookmarked message to a listener; and  
3              incorporating the one or more associated audio cues along with respective portions of the  
4       voice mail message corresponding to the one or more bookmarks.

1       31. The method according to Claim 30, wherein the step of incorporating the one or more  
2       associated audio cues further comprises incorporating each associated audio cue with its  
3       respective portion of the voice mail message.

1       32. The method according to Claim 30, wherein the step of incorporating the one or more  
2       associated audio cues further comprises incorporating each associated audio cue in-line with its  
3       respective portion of the voice mail message.

1       33. A system for enhancing voice mail messages, comprising:  
2              means for leaving a voice mail message by a caller; and  
3              means for providing one or more bookmarks for the voice mail message.

1       34. The system according to Claim 33, further comprising means for creating a bookmarked  
2       message from the voice mail message and the associated bookmarks.

1       35. The system according to Claim 34, further comprising means for playing the bookmarked  
2       message to a listener.

1       36. The system according to Claim 33, wherein selected ones of the bookmarks segment the  
2       voice mail message according to one or more topics.

1       37. The system according to Claim 33, wherein selected ones of the bookmarks correspond to  
2       one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

1       38. The system according to Claim 37, wherein the special types of information comprise one  
2       or more of: (1) a callback telephone number for the caller; (2) a callback time at which to respond  
3       to the voice mail message; and/or (3) a callback date on which to respond to the voice mail  
4       message.

1       39. The system according to Claim 37, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

1       40. The system according to Claim 37, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

1       41. The system according to Claim 34, further comprising means for using the selected  
2       bookmarks to perform actions selectively on one or more segments of the voice mail message.

1       42. The system according to Claim 41, wherein the selected segments are associated with a  
2       topic of the voice mail message.

1       43. The system according to Claim 41, wherein the selected segments have one or more  
2       different degrees of importance.  
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1       44. The system according to Claim 41, wherein the actions comprise one or more of saving,  
2       deleting, forwarding, listening, skipping, or repeating the one or more segments.

1       45. The system according to Claim 44, wherein the actions further comprise marking a  
2       selected segment as protected or confidential.

1       46. The system according to Claim 45, further comprising forwarding the marked segment to  
2       another party.

3       47. The system according to Claim 41, wherein the selected segments are associated with one  
4       or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

1       48. The system according to Claim 47, wherein at least one of the special types of information  
2       comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and where at least one of the actions comprises  
3       establishing a connection to the URL.

1       49. The system according to Claim 35, further comprising means for announcing a number of  
2       the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.  
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1       50. The system according to Claim 43, further comprising means for announcing the different  
2       degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

1       51. The system according to Claim 37, further comprising means for announcing the special  
2       types of information in the voice mail message.

1       52. The method according to Claim 37, wherein particular ones of the special types of  
2       information are required, and further comprising means for prompting the caller to provide input  
3       for each particular one for which no bookmark is otherwise provided.

1       53. The system according to Claim 34, further comprising means for associating one or more  
2       audio cues with one or more bookmarks of the voice mail message.

1       54. The system according to Claim 53, further comprising:  
2           means for playing the bookmarked message to a listener; and

3 means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues along with respective  
4 portions of the voice mail message corresponding to the one or more bookmarks.

1 55. The system according to Claim 54, wherein the means for incorporating the one or more  
2 associated audio cues further comprises means for incorporating each associated audio cue with  
3 its respective portion of the voice mail message.  
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1 56. The system according to Claim 54, wherein the means for incorporating the one or more  
2 associated audio cues further comprises means for incorporating each associated audio cue in-line  
3 with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

1 57. A computer program product for enhancing voice mail messages, the computer program  
2 product embodied on one or more computer-readable media and comprising:  
3 computer-readable program code means for providing one or more bookmarks for a voice  
4 mail message left by a caller; and  
5 computer-readable program code means for creating a bookmarked message from the left  
6 voice mail message and the provided bookmarks.

1 58. The computer program product according to Claim 57, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for playing the created bookmarked message to a listener.

1       59. The computer program product according to Claim 57, wherein selected ones of the  
2       bookmarks segment the voice mail message according to one or more topics.

1       60. The computer program product according to Claim 57, wherein selected ones of the  
2       bookmarks are used to mark one or more segments of the voice mail message as having one or  
3       more different degrees of importance.  
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1       61. The computer program product according to Claim 60, wherein a default degree of  
2       importance is associated with segments not otherwise marked.

1       62. The computer program product according to Claim 57, wherein selected ones of the  
2       bookmarks correspond to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

1       63. The computer program product according to Claim 62, wherein the special types of  
2       information comprise one or more of: (1) a callback telephone number for the caller; (2) a  
3       callback time at which to respond to the voice mail message; and/or (3) a callback date on which  
4       to respond to the voice mail message.

1       64. The computer program product according to Claim 62, wherein at least one of the special  
2       types of information is a name of the caller.

1       65. The computer program product according to Claim 62, wherein at least one of the special  
2 types of information is an e-mail address.

1       66. The computer program product according to Claim 62, wherein at least one of the special  
2 types of information is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

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1       67. The computer program product according to Claim 59, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for using the selected bookmarks to navigate from one topic of the  
3 voice mail message to another.

1       68. The computer program product according to Claim 58, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for using the bookmarks to perform actions selectively on one or  
3 more segments of the voice mail message.

1       69. The computer program product according to Claim 68, wherein the selected segments are  
2 associated with a topic of the voice mail message.

1       70. The computer program product according to Claim 68, wherein the selected segments  
2 have one or more different degrees of importance.

1       71. The computer program product according to Claim 68, wherein the actions comprise one  
2 or more of: saving a particular segment; deleting a particular segment; skipping a particular

3 segment; forwarding a particular segment; listening to a particular segment; repeating playback of  
4 a particular segment; and marking a particular segment as protected or confidential prior to  
5 forwarding the marked segment to another party.

1 72. The computer program product according to Claim 68, wherein the selected segments are  
2 associated with one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.  
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1 73. The computer program product according to Claim 72, wherein at least one of the special  
2 types of information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and where at least one of the  
3 actions comprises establishing a connection to the URL.

1 74. The computer program product according to Claim 58, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for announcing a number of the bookmarked segments in the voice  
3 mail message.

1 75. The computer program product according to Claim 60, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for announcing a number of the segments in the different degrees of  
3 importance.

1 76. The computer program product according to Claim 62, further comprising computer-  
2 readable program code means for announcing a number of the special types of information in the  
3 voice mail message.

1       77. The computer program product according to Claim 62, wherein particular ones of the  
2       special types of information are required, and further comprising computer-readable program  
3       code means for prompting the caller to provide input for each particular one for which no  
4       bookmark is otherwise provided.

1       78. The computer program product according to Claim 58, further comprising computer-  
2       readable program code means for associating one or more audio cues with one or more  
3       bookmarks of the voice mail message.

1       79. The computer program product according to Claim 78, further comprising:  
2              computer-readable program code means for playing the bookmarked message to a listener;  
3              and  
4              computer-readable program code means for incorporating the one or more associated  
5              audio cues along with respective portions of the voice mail message corresponding to the one or  
6              more bookmarks.

1       80. The computer program product according to Claim 79, wherein the computer-readable  
2       program code means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises  
3       computer-readable program code means for incorporating each associated audio cue with its  
4       respective portion of the voice mail message.

1       81. The computer program product according to Claim 79, wherein the computer-readable  
2 program code means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises  
3 computer-readable program code means for incorporating each associated audio cue in-line with  
4 its respective portion of the voice mail message.